

Kentucky Teacher

AUGUST 1999

Revised core content is user friendly

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Kentucky educators are beginning the school year with a revised edition of the "Core Content for Assessment" to help guide instruction in the 1999-2000 school year and beyond. While the thought of a *revised edition* may evoke a "Not more changes!" response from Kentucky teachers, curriculum coordinators, administrators and assessment coordinators, a quick perusal of the document is likely to put any concerns to rest.

There are no major changes in the document, and that means there will be no major changes in what is assessed on the Kentucky Core Content Tests beginning in spring 2000. The revised document, however, is more user friendly and better aligned to national education standards, say those Kentucky educators, parents, and business and community representatives involved in the revision process.

The revised document has been sent to every district. It also is posted on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site at www.kde.state.ky.us. Select "Core Content for Assessment" in the pull-down menu.

The revision process made many entries easier to understand than in the previous edition. The entries also contain examples to give both new and experienced teachers guidance for instruction and assessment. The core content provides the context that test developers use to design multiple-choice and open-response questions and on-demand writing prompts.

From February to July, teams of teachers, administrators, parents, university representatives, and business



DRAWING CONCLUSIONS — Resource teacher Vicki Hurt and student Paige Relinski discuss an art project at Botts Elementary in Menifee County. The arts are included in Kentucky's program of studies and the Kentucky Core Content Tests.

and community representatives reviewed and revised the document. At each step, the participants said their findings and comments from thousands of content teachers and the general public showed there was no need for major changes, just clarifications and the addition of examples.

That message emerged from the final revision meetings in late June at Elkhorn Middle School in Frankfort. "We're simplifying, rewording to make (the entries) less nebulous," said Maria Kenner, a parent from Kenton County who has held local and regional PTA posts and serves as a coordinator for the Prichard Committee's Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership. She was working with the elementary arts and humanities content. "We've all been involved in every area (mu-

sic, dance, art and drama). If an art teacher can understand the music portion, then the music teacher should be able to understand it."

Jim Moore, a Danville High School mathematics teacher, described his group's work on mathematics content. "The main difference (between the old document and the revision) is that we've worked to make it much, much clearer. It should be clear to all teachers what will be assessed in mathematics."

"This has been a rigorous process," said Janice Eaves, mathematics consultant at the Region 2 Service Center. "It's not been just a small group of people making these decisions. There has been input from across the state, and that input has been valued."

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Accountability regulations become state laws

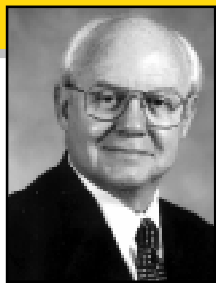
Several major components of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) became state law during the summer. These regulations are in place to govern assessment and accountability for Kentucky schools:

- Interim accountability for 1998-2000 (703 KAR 5:060);
- Long-term accountability for 2000 and beyond (703 KAR 5:020);
- Writing portfolio procedures (703 KAR 5:010);
- School classifications, A1-A6 (703 KAR 5:040);
- School performance judgment appeals (703 KAR 5:050).

The **interim accountability model** has been determined by national testing experts as the most "statistically sound way" to bridge test results from the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) Cycle 3 (1996-98) to the first two years (1998-2000) of the Kentucky Core Content Tests, which are part of CATS. The model will use data from all state tests taken in school years 1996-2000 to determine rewards and assistance for the year 2000.

In the year 2002 and beyond, Kentucky will use the **long-term accountability model** to determine rewards and assistance for schools. The model defines how

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Commissioner's Comments

Education continues to evolve as reform reaches the 10-year mark

By Wilmer S. Cody
Commissioner of Education

As the year 2000 approaches, all of us will read and hear a lot about the 10th anniversary of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. It is worth taking some time to put this milestone in proper context, to think about ways to celebrate the progress we have made and examine how far we must go to reach the goals we have set for ourselves.

The Kentucky Education Reform Act was passed in 1990, launching a new system of public education that has continued to evolve and improve since then. Because our system is designed to respond to changing findings and needs, it is inappropriate to ask now, at the end of the first 10 years, "Did reform work?" Instead, we need to be asking, "Is reform working?"

Clearly, the answer is yes. Before 1990, based on standard economic and

sociological indicators of the time, Kentucky was perceived to be at or near the bottom in educational achievement. Today, nationally accepted data place Kentucky near the middle of the pack in student achievement. The challenge is how to build on the momentum established over the past 10 years. We are on the right path; we just have farther to go.

Unlike past attempts at education reform, the one that began in 1990 was much more than a series of programs to be implemented. This reform challenged basic, long-held beliefs about school, teaching and the learning capacity of children. Reform required all of us to change our ideas about learning and then put our new thinking into practice by changing what we teach and how we teach it.

Education reform is not a "big bang" event. It comes gradually, school by school. In some schools, reform took root and began to thrive as

early as 1992 or 1993; in some, it took hold a few years later; in others, the seeds have yet to sprout. This is how true, systemic reform really works. From a statewide perspective, there is no single or clear beginning; there is no single anniversary. Each school made its own beginning; each has its own history and its own anniversaries.

Still, all of those local beginnings and anniversaries are tied to that historic event 10 years ago and the many people responsible for creating and preserving the reform effort. Both the event and the people deserve recognition on a grand scale. So do the tens of thousands of parents, teachers and local education leaders who continue to work so diligently to improve learning school by school, classroom by classroom throughout the state.

Kentucky's public education system is well under way. Over its first 10 years, the system has continued to evolve as needed, and it is starting to

show positive results. It is a model for state education reform efforts throughout the nation. The system is the product of a decision-making process that draws on broad public involvement, expert advice and collaboration. This process encourages and benefits from the participation of Kentucky's students, parents, educators, taxpayers, business leaders and all other interested citizens. It is an open and trustworthy process. Reasonable people can understand and accept the results, even if they don't always agree.

While we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Kentucky Education Reform Act, we would be wise to resist evaluating reform's results in simplistic terms. A more productive approach is to stay focused on the long-term goal — proficiency for all by 2014 — and all of the work that must be done to get there.

Kentucky Teacher FORUM

Open discussion about public education

This Month's Topic: Parents and Teachers as Partners

Parent involvement in public education has always been important, but perhaps never more than now. Tragedies on school grounds have focused the nation's attention on the need for schools, families and communities to unite in teaching, supporting and guiding all students. Two-way communication between home and school can not only boost academic achievement; it literally can be vital.

Question: What is your most effective strategy for making parents your partners in improving your students' academic achievement and in-school behavior?

Send your response or comments on this topic to *Kentucky Teacher*. Include your name, mailing address, phone number, school and grade level. We will assume we have your permission to publish all or part of your response, with your name and school affiliation, unless you state otherwise.

- Send e-mail to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us.
- Send U.S. mail to 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.
- Send a fax to (502) 564-6470.

Watch future issues of *Kentucky Teacher* for responses.

FORUM



Teachers speak out about middle-grades education

In the May issue, *Kentucky Teacher* asked teachers two questions:

1. What one change at the school or district level would do the most to improve student performance in grades 6-8?

2. What one change at the state level would do the most to improve student performance in grades 6-8?

Teachers who responded focused their comments on class size, each teacher's daily class load and, above all, the needs of middle-grades students. While space won't permit publication of all comments, this sampling represents the points of view received. Responses are posted in full in the text-only electronic edition of *Kentucky Teacher* on the Department of Education Web site (www.kde.state.ky.us).

Responses

- Lower the number of students I am responsible for during any given class period. ... Last year ... I saw approximately 175 students per day in six 45-minute periods. With that type of load, I lose the feeling that I am teaching children and begin to feel that it's all about covering the material and surviving. ... Once class sizes are made manageable, then *plainly* delineate what will be expected on assessment items for these children.

Seventh-graders deal with all the pressures that come with turning 13 and do not need the exceedingly pressurized conditions that come with being crammed into a single classroom with 30 or 31 other 13-year-olds Add teachers who feel confused and unsure about what the state tests will assess ... , and the classroom climate is one of profound tension.

Middle-grade students are in dan-

ger of becoming lost in that "no-man's land" between teenager and child with no one to guide them but others their own age ... until we prove to them that we have their best interests at heart.

Patricia McDougal, 7th-grade science teacher, Edmonson County Middle School



- It is positively ridiculous to cram 28 to 32 middle school students in one classroom and expect proficient or distinguished performances. Not only do young people of this age need the *most* individual attention of all age groups, their physical size alone should dictate more space per student. In addition, no thought or planning is given as regards the numbers in a science lab versus a reading or English class.

Also, teacher load at the middle school level (5-6 classes per day) does not allow time for the teacher to properly plan, reflect or evaluate. Student performance can be improved by reducing class size — especially in the lab (science) classes — and by reducing the number of classes taught (each day) by a middle school teacher.

Obviously, the change needed at the state level ... is to increase funding and legislate the needed changes.

Betty Batch, science teacher, Foley Middle School (Madison County)



- The one change I would suggest at the district level would be to stop considering us merely a transition stage to high school. Middle-

schoolers and middle school teachers suffer from lack of identity and respect as a unique and integral part of a child's education. At the state level ... provide as much recognition, support, consulting services, researched information, emphasis, etc., as has been provided the primary (most recently) and the high school (always). ... With such changes, teachers 6-9 will be validated, will find researched answers for their specific questions, and will find programs developed for their specific needs. In turn, students at that level will evidence academic gain.

E. Carolyn Tucker, social studies and language arts teacher, Dixon Elementary/Middle School, (Webster County)



- If you want to know how to improve *anything* in the school, then reduce the class to 18 students to one teacher.

Amanda Smith Caudill, 6th-grade teacher, Harrison County Middle School



Do you have ideas for improving middle-grades education? Please send them to Fran W. Salyers, Middle-Level Initiative Team Leader, Kentucky Department of Education, 500 Mero St. (18th Floor), Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-2106; fwsalyer@kde.state.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

MIDDLE GRADER — C.J. Powers listens to a presentation at Westport Middle School. C.J. was one of more than 146,000 Kentucky students enrolled in middle grades 6, 7 and 8 last year.

10 Links for Learning

Teachers report favorite Web sites for students

Kentucky teachers have recommended the following Internet sites for students. As always, begin each address with <http://> to locate these sites.

Science

- The Nine Planets: A Multimedia Tour of the Solar System (www.seds.org/nineplanets/nineplanets/) — “By far the site most used by students in my classroom. We use this for research, pictures for PowerPoint and ideas about space.”

- Space Telescope Science Institute (oposite.stsci.edu/pubinfo/subject.html) — “We use this site for pictures from Hubble to include in our PowerPoint presentations and reports.”

- University of Michigan Weather (cirrus.sprl.umich.edu/wxnet/) — “For our unit on weather, we use this site the most, as well as local weather channels.”

Rose Adkins, schoolwide resource teacher, grades 5-8, Hardinsburg Elementary (Breckinridge County)

Writing/Language Arts

- Highwired Online High School

(www.highwired.net) — “... allows high schools to have their own (free) newspaper. You can even insert photos and graphics!”

Phyllis Guthrie, school technology coordinator/technology integration specialist, Nicholas County Schools

- Buddy's Beard-ed Collie Literacy Notebook (www.skyline.net/~scarfone/buddy.htm) — “... featuring the ‘Bentley and Blueberry’ project. It is so exciting to see the technology engage kids in the writing process. The kids write to this adorable dog, and he writes back! It has really made my kids want to write.”

Diane Wiles, primary teacher, Breckinridge Elementary (Fayette County)

General

- Kids Web Digital Library (www.npac.syr.edu/textbook/kidsweb/)

(index.html) — “... offers great information about most content-area subjects. It is like having the entire library at your fingertips. I have used the site

to explore art and art-

ists, volcanoes

and the human

heart. The site

provides easily

understood di-

rections and

guidance to in-

formation.

Words that stu-

dents might not

understand are

highlighted. Stu-

dents can click on

the words to get dictio-

nary definitions. Several

of the pages allow for questions to be sent to specialists in the field, such as geologists. The students can then receive e-mailed answers to their questions. It is a great site!”

- Berit's Best Sites for Children (www.cochran.com/theosite/Ksites.html) — “... a good choice for teachers who don't really know what is on the Web. It lists many good sites and can help you find what you are

looking for.”

Cyndy Garrett, teacher, West Louisville Elementary (Daviss County)

Research

- Community Learning Network “For Kids Only” (www.cln.org/kids/index.html) — “... A number of links to Internet sites that contain information and/or other links.”

- Study Web (www.studyweb.com/index2.htm) — “You name it, and this site has it! More than 84,000 research URLs.”

- Ask an Expert (www.askanexpert.com) — “... a directory of links to people who have volunteered their time to answer questions and to Web pages that provide information.”

Eleanor Savko, district technology resource teacher, Hardin County Schools

What are your favorite Web sites for teaching and learning? Send the addresses with a brief description or comment about each site to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us.

New teachers can find help on the Internet

For new teachers — and veteran teachers looking for new ideas or a professional boost — encouragement and help are available 24 hours a day on the Web. Many of the following sites were listed in the May 1999 issue of “Educational Leadership.”

- **Beginning Teacher's Tool Box** (www.inspiringteachers.com) — Veteran teachers answer questions and offer tips, inspiration, humor and the top 10 things to do before school starts.

- **Teachers Helping Teachers** (www.pacificnet.net/~mandel/index.html) — Basic teaching tips, lesson plans and features like “Poem of the Week” and “This Week's Stress Reduction Moment.”

- **Teachers.net: Mentor Support Center** (www.teachers.net) — Click “chatboards” for category-specific chats. Also features lesson plans, live meetings, a list of useful resources and a newsletter.

- **I Love Teaching.com** (www.iloveteaching.com) — Experiences and wisdom from a veteran teacher. Click “Tid-Bits” for a list of things a rookie teacher wishes she had known before stepping into the classroom.

- **The New Teacher Page** (www.geocities.com/~newteach/) — Designed to help and inspire first-year teachers and those exploring the field.

- **Homepage for New Math Teachers** (www.clarityconnect.com/webpages/terri/terri.html) — Information all new teachers can use, including tips on how to

connect with students, classroom management, and other professional areas. Features a monthly math problem and an archive of “Most Loved Problems.”

- **What to Expect Your First Year of Teaching** (www.ed.gov/pubs/FirstYear/title.html) — Insights, observations and classroom tips from award-winning veteran and first-year teachers.

- **Great Expectations: Helpful Hints for Beginning Teachers** (www.positiveparenting.com/jane4.html) — Answers to many of the questions, concerns and self-doubts new teachers are likely to have.

- **Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators** (discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/) — A list of education Web sites so well organized that you don't have to be an Internet whiz to find something you can use.

- **Appalachia Regional Educational Laboratory** (www.ael.org) — Home page for a nonprofit research, development and service institution that links knowledge from research with the wisdom from practice to improve teaching and learning.

- **The New Teacher's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education** (www.ed.gov/pubs/TeachersGuide/title.html) — A wealth of free information.

- **Teacher Resources on the Internet from the Federal Government** (www.ed.gov/pubs/TeachersGuide/teacher.html) — A page full of links to Web resources for teacher and student research and fact finding.

National center lists indicators that a student may be troubled

The new school year begins with excitement, anticipation, enthusiasm — and, for some, maybe a little fear. While statistics show that schools are among the safest places anybody can be, tragic and highly publicized events involving students and weapons in schools have put the nation on notice. Nobody believes anymore that “it can’t happen here.”

Since 1992, the National School Safety Center has studied characteristics common to students who have caused school-associated violent deaths. Their findings indicate that, in most cases, these students had demonstrated or talked to others about problems with bullies and feelings of isolation, anger, depression and frustration.

From its findings, the center developed a list of traits and behaviors that can alert school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and others to potential problems. The 20 behaviors can be early warnings that a student is troubled. They can alert educators to the need for meetings with parents and the need for school counseling, guidance and mentoring services. They also may prompt referrals to community health and social services and notification of law enforcement agencies.

“While there is no foolproof system for identifying potentially dangerous students who may harm themselves or others,” states the center on its Internet site (www.NSSC1.org/home.htm), “this checklist provides a starting point.”

1. Student has a history of tantrums and uncontrollable angry outbursts.
2. Student characteristically resorts to name calling, cursing or abusive language.
3. Student habitually makes violent threats when angry.
4. Student has previously brought a weapon to school.
5. Student has a background of seri-

ous disciplinary problems at school and in the community.

6. Student has a background of drug, alcohol or other substance abuse or dependency.
7. Student is on the fringe of his or her peer group with few or no close friends.
8. Student is preoccupied with weapons, explosives or other incendiary devices.
9. Student has previously been truant, suspended or expelled from school.
10. Student displays cruelty to animals.
11. Student has little or no supervision and support from parents or a caring adult.
12. Student has witnessed or been a victim of abuse or neglect in the home.
13. Student has been bullied and/or bullies or intimidates peers or younger children.
14. Student tends to blame others for difficulties and problems he or she causes.
15. Student consistently prefers TV shows, movies or music expressing violent themes and acts.
16. Student prefers reading materials dealing with violent themes, rituals and abuse.
17. Student reflects anger, frustration and the dark side of life in school essays or writing projects.
18. Student is involved with a gang or an antisocial group on the fringe of peer acceptance.
19. Student is often depressed and/or has significant mood swings.
20. Student has threatened or attempted suicide.

The center also underscored the need for having safe school plans and crisis prevention and intervention procedures in place at every school.



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Core Content

Continued from Page 1

Steve Seif with the University of Louisville Mathematics Department called the process "thorough and informed." Both Seif and University of Kentucky mathematics professor David Leep were involved in the final revision of the document that guides what high school students learn in mathematics. The revised core content document will show teachers the expectations at each level in each content area as well as the depth of understanding that will be assessed, Leep said.

For more information about the revised document, contact Rhonda Sims, Division of Curriculum Development, at (502) 564-2106 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or rsims@kde.state.ky.us.

COMPARISONS

These examples show how the revisions simplify and clarify Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment

Examples: High School Mathematics Number/Combination Skills

Version 1.0

Students should be able to use operations on real numbers such as opposite, reciprocal, absolute value, power, root, logarithm, factorial.

Students should be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide complex numbers.

Students should be able to use matrices to represent and/or solve practical problems.

Students should be able to generate sequences and series; find sums of series.

Final Revised Version

Students will simplify real number expressions such as those containing opposites, reciprocals, absolute value, exponents (integer only), roots (square and cube) and factorials.

Students will perform addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with real numbers in problem-solving situations to specified accuracy.

Students will use matrix addition, subtraction, multiplication (no larger than 2 X 2) and scalar multiplication to solve real-world problems.

Students will determine specific terms of a sequence given an explicit formula; write an explicit rule for the nth term of arithmetic and geometric sequences.

Examples: Elementary Social Studies, Government and Civics

Version 1.0

The Constitution of the United States establishes a government of limited powers, which are shared among different levels and branches. The three levels of government are local, state and national.

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Final Revised Version

The three levels of government are local, state and national.

The three levels of government are legislative (propose bills/make laws), executive (carry out or enforce laws) and judicial (interpret laws).

Every level of government has specific offices associated with each branch which vary in title but contain similar duties (e.g., executive: local-mayor; state-governor; national-president).

Regulations

Continued from Page 1

results of each school's performance on the Kentucky Core Content Tests, the national basic skills test and non-academic factors will be counted to help schools stay focused on continuous improvement.

Every school will have its own customized growth chart that establishes the necessary growth for that school from its baseline to 100 (on a 140-point scale) by the year 2014. Each school's test scores in 1998 and 2000 will determine the school's baseline. Each school's progress in 2002 will be measured against its baseline.

In the year 2002, schools will receive rewards for meeting or exceeding their goals, being classified as a pacesetter school or passing established recognition points. To receive rewards under any provision of this model, a school must meet the dropout rate reduction requirement and be on track for reducing the number of students in the "novice" performance range to 5 percent or less by 2014.

The Kentucky Core Content Tests scoring process will assign a weight of 67 percent to open-response items and 33 percent to multiple-choice items.

Additionally, the long-term accountability model will recognize growth within the novice and apprentice categories in reading, mathematics, science and social studies. The novice and apprentice categories will have low, medium and high levels to give schools and students credit for incremental progress.

Writing portfolios compiled by Kentucky students will contain fewer pieces as a result of the regulation on **writing portfolio procedures**. The new procedure also includes strategies for reducing the time required to prepare portfolios and suggests that teachers assign writing tasks that relate to the content being studied in class.

The new process puts a 30-portfolio cap on the number to be scored by each teacher, but it gives teachers the flexibility to score more than 30 if they choose. Portfolio scores are part of the CATS accountability formula. The regulation reiterates the need for teachers to receive professional development focused on the types of writing assessed in the portfolios.

The **school classifications** regulation specifies that students in A2-A6 schools will be tracked back to the sending school for accountability purposes. The regulation also defines how rewards and assistance will be delivered to A2-A6 staffs. A2-A6 classifications indicate district-operated schools for vocational-technical, special education, preschool and at-risk students, plus district-operated instructional programs in other institutions.

Another regulation establishes a process for a school to appeal a **performance judgment** it considers to be "grossly unfair."

A regulation that provides procedures for including special populations in the Kentucky Core Content Tests and a regulation that clarifies issues related to appropriate assessment practices also have been promulgated and may become law soon.

This school year, the Kentucky Board of Education will consider the feasibility of student accountability and district accountability as part of CATS. The board also continues to monitor development of an annual school report card that replaces the Annual Performance Report.

The new regulations can be found at the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site, www.kde.state.ky.us/legal. Click on Kentucky Administrative Regulations and request each regulation by "703" number or by key words in the regulation name (interim accountability, long-term accountability, writing portfolio procedures, school classifications, school performance judgment appeals).

Breakfast plus books equals food for thought

by Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

"Ecstatic does not come close to describing how my students feel about the Breakfast Book Club," says Boyle County High School English teacher Mardi Montgomery.

Similar clubs and programs promote reading throughout the state, but Boyle County has added a twist: interaction among students and parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, educators and business/community leaders.

Montgomery's Honors English I students divided themselves into four groups, each group reading one of four chosen novels. In April, the selections included "Catcher in the Rye," "The Inferno," "Cold Sassy Tree" and "The Hobbit." Each student invited a "partner" to read one of the books and prepare to discuss it. These partners — lawyers, government leaders, sisters, grandmothers and friends — then met with the students before classes and workdays began to eat breakfast and discuss the books.

The result: Both students and partners benefited from shared perceptions and ideas from individuals of diverse cultures, generations, professions and values.

"There were many things brought up that I had never thought of before," said Melinda Kitzmiller, a freshman at Boyle County High. Classmate Shan-

Web site. They also wrote letters about the club to The Rosie O'Donnell Show and to Oprah Winfrey, whose own book club inspired the creation of the Breakfast Book Club.

Montgomery said she has been pleased by the results. "One of the most rewarding aspects is the willingness of the students to facilitate the discussions

and their initiative to organize, work and, most importantly, read," she said. Montgomery said she has seen a dramatic increase in the students' motivation to read outside of class.

"I have students who are not only reading one selection, but students who are reading two selections in one month,

outside of class," Montgomery said, "... and they are reading with zest and critical analysis because of the discussions."

Montgomery reports only one glitch so far, one that she says she will take in stride. "The main obstacle I

have faced is having enough books for students and guests. I would like to secure a bookstore sponsor or publisher to help with book purchases."

The two sessions held last spring were so successful that Montgomery plans to continue the club this school year. Themes for the readings will include setting goals, Kentucky authors, arts, sports, and business and industry. Plans also include involving area elementary students, neighboring school districts and the Kentucky School for the Deaf.

For more information on the Boyle County Breakfast Book Club, visit the Web site at <http://170.183.152.133/bbc/main.htm>; e-mail Montgomery through the KETS global listing or at mmontgomery@boyle.k12.ky.us, or call Boyle County High School at (606) 236-5047.



Boyle County High School student Milada Jusufovic listens as Centre College professor Preston Miles shares his perspectives with participants of the school's Breakfast Book Club.

non Rains added, "It is neat to hear different ideas and share perspectives from different views."

The students wrote reviews of the books for local print and broadcast media and posted them to the school's

Photo by Rick McComb

What's your out-of-the-box idea?

You probably have an idea for bringing innovation and excitement to teaching and learning. Why not follow up? Your idea just might work! When it does, share the news in *Kentucky Teacher*. Send information to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us or call Fran Salyers at (502) 564-3421.

Barren County Middle wins national recognition

Barren County Middle School is one of only two schools in the U.S. chosen for recognition as a high-performing "school to watch" by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

Another Kentucky school, Eminence Middle, ranked in the Forum's top seven.

Fifty of the nation's middle schools applied for the "Schools to Watch" program, which identifies schools as "high performing" based on academic excellence, social equity and responsiveness to students' developmental needs. The Forum visited seven of the 50 schools (including Kentucky's Barren County and Eminence middle

schools) and evaluated them against its own criteria. Only two schools in the nation were selected for "Schools to Watch" recognition: Barren County Middle School in Kentucky and Jefferson Middle School in Champaign, IL.

The Forum, an affiliate of the Education Development Center, is now

evaluating inner-city schools and plans to designate one as a third "school to watch."

Information about the Forum's criteria for identifying high-performing middle-grades schools is available on the Internet at www.edc.org/FSC/MGF/.

HUNGER!

Students can't learn on empty stomachs

By Fran Salyers
Kentucky Department of Education

You've used every tried-and-true approach and some new stuff, too, but your students' grades and test scores haven't taken that upward spiral you're looking for. Several students still disrupt class with their restlessness and silly antics, and one or two fall asleep every day!

You want them to be hungry for learning. Maybe they're hungry for food.

The connection between adequate nutrition and the ability to learn is nothing new, but a three-year study in Minnesota delivers hard new data. The study shows the impact a well-balanced breakfast can have on student achievement and behavior.

Six schools participated in the universal breakfast program study (so called because the meal was made universally available to all students, not just those who met financial need guidelines). School food service personnel served well-balanced breakfasts every school day and worked closely with teachers to create programs that fit smoothly into the daily schedule and reinforce the curriculum. Breakfast became an accepted part of the instructional day, with students eating while watching educational programming, reading or discussing assignments.

The University of Minnesota's Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement evaluated the program's impact on student disci-

pline, test scores, attendance and other measures of educational progress and achievement. The findings are food for thought:

- With the stigma of subsidized meal programs eliminated, student participation at the six schools ranged from 76 percent to 93 percent. Nutritionally, students from all socio-economic levels started every school day on equal footing.

- School nurses reported significant decreases in the number of students leaving class during morning hours because of minor illnesses, especially headaches and stomachaches (sym-

toms commonly related to hunger).

- Teachers at all six schools reported that students were more energetic and alert throughout the entire morning. Students had longer attention spans. They concentrated on their school work instead of counting the hours and minutes until lunch time.

- Behavior problems decreased. Discipline referrals dropped by 40 percent to 50 percent in one year. Administrators credit the universal breakfast program.

- A comparison of test scores made by 3rd-grade students and the scores

same students made in 6th grade (after being in the breakfast program for three years) showed a general increase

in composite mathematics and reading percentile scores. While the program evaluators recognize the many variables involved in testing, they report that the universal school breakfast program appeared to play a role in improving student achievement.

- More than 91 percent of parents with children in the program agree or strongly agree that the program has had positive benefits. Parents, teachers, administrators and students report a variety of social benefits.

Want to know more about the results of this study? Request a summary ("Energizing the Classroom") from Linda Dunsmore, Kentucky Department of Education, Division of School and Community Nutrition, 1024 Capital Center, Versailles Road, Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 573-4390; ldunsmor@kde.state.ky.us.

Owsley County Elementary teacher Regina Holmes reinforces good nutrition by talking with her younger primary students about the food pyramid and the importance of making good food choices every day at every meal.



Photos by Rick McComb



Students at Owsley County Elementary make their breakfast in a jungle-motif cafeteria before classes start.

Free-to-all meals work for three Kentucky districts

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Three Kentucky school districts have gone a step beyond the Minnesota study (see Page 8) by offering both breakfast and lunch free to all students regardless of family income.

Owsley County, Jackson County and Wolfe County districts have high percentages of students eligible for free- and reduced-price meals, which makes it easier to offer a free-to-all program, said Paul McElwain, director of the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of School and Community Nutrition.

"The key is *everyone* eating free," said Owsley County Food Service Director Melinda Turner. "It removes the stigma often attached to participation in the school breakfast program. The program is viewed as an integral part of the educational process. Just like the bus ride to school and textbooks, breakfast is available free to all children."

At Owsley County High School, students eat breakfast during a 10-minute break between classes. "(The high school students) probably would be more upset if we took away breakfast than if we took away lunch. Breakfast is the critical meal," Turner said.

At Owsley County Elementary, teacher Regina Holmes knows breakfast makes a difference for her primary students. "You can tell who has eaten breakfast and who hasn't," she said. "They're more alert." Fellow teacher Diane Rasner said her primary students' reading abilities have increased over the last few years. She attributes the increase in part to the breakfast program.

In Jackson County, teachers observing students who eat breakfast have noticed changes similar to those reported by the Minnesota study: more alertness, more energy, better behavior. "I am not sure that we have 'hard data,'" said Diana Miller, the district's food service director, "but teachers have commented that students are more ready to learn and more relaxed in class — not as many discipline problems."

In Wolfe County's universal breakfast program, the number of students eating breakfast increased 12.3 percent from the start to the end of the first year, said Food Service Director Kaye Whisman.

The three districts include nutrition instruction as part of the curriculum. "I have sent data to the school newspaper, and nutritional information has been broadcast throughout the community on the local school information channel," said Whisman.

At Owsley County Elementary, Holmes teaches a unit on nutrition during National Nutrition Month in March. "In class, we talk about the food pyramid and the importance of making good food choices," she said. Rasner incorporates health, fitness and food in lessons throughout the year. As she teaches fractions in mathematics, she cuts up apples and talks not only about how many pieces she has from the whole, but also about why apples are good food.

While breakfast may be the most important meal of the day, it is often the hardest meal for students to find time to eat. "It is difficult in some cases to get students to school early enough to sit

down, eat and still meet the minimum six-hour instructional day," said McElwain.

Ninety-five percent of Kentucky public schools serve breakfast. However, only 27 percent of the students eat breakfast at school. The Kentucky School Food Service Association is considering a proposal for the 2000 General Assembly that would help more students get morning meals. Janey Thornton, director of child nutrition programs for Hardin County Schools and the public policy and legislative chair of the state food service organization, said the group would like a minimum time for breakfast included in the instructional day.

To learn more about universal breakfast programs and how this approach might work in your school, contact the people mentioned on these pages. (Those with e-mail addresses may also be reached through the KETS global list.)

Paul McElwain: (502) 573-4390;
pmcelwai@kde.state.ky.us

Melinda Turner: (606) 593-6363;
mtturner@owsley.k12.ky.us

Diana Miller: (606) 287-7181;
dmiller@jackson.k12.ky.us

Kaye Whisman: (606) 668-8002;
kwhisman@wolfe.k12.ky.us

Diane Rasner and Regina Holmes: (606) 593-6363

Janey Thornton: (270) 769-8880;
jthornto@hardin.k12.ky.us



ast meal selections in the



Breakfast is good for teachers, too!

Teachers, breakfast could be good for your mental health. According to research reported by the International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition, adults who eat breakfast every day tend to feel less stressed and less depressed. Daily breakfast eaters also report lower levels of emotional distress than those who do not eat breakfast on a daily basis.

In the study of adults ages 20 to 79 years old, those who ate breakfast every day tended to exhibit other healthful habits such as not smoking, drinking less alcohol and maintaining a more balanced diet.

What does hunger look like?

California-based nutrition expert Doris Derelian, a past president of the American Dietetic Association, has related these signals to hunger:

Physical Signals

- stomach pain
- headache
- muscle tension, muscle fatigue
- sleepiness

Psycho-Social Signals

- anxiety, anger, hostility
- nervousness, restlessness, giddiness
- indecisiveness, confusion

While these symptoms and behaviors may be caused by factors other than hunger and chronically poor nutrition, Kentucky Department of Education nutrition consultant Linda Dunsmore encourages teachers to consider hunger a possibility when a student exhibits these symptoms on a consistent basis.

The Department of Education offers professional development on several nutrition-related topics. For details, call Linda C. Dunsmore at the Division of School and Community Nutrition, (502) 573-4390 or e-mail her through the KETS global listing or at ldunsmor@kde.state.ky.us.

Integration weaves TAPESTRY

of arts and sciences teaching



Photo by Rick McComb

Students Courtney Love (left) and Elizabeth Foster demonstrate how air fills, supports and lifts a hot air balloon. Their school, Southside Primary in Shelby County, uses a grant to integrate the arts and physical sciences to address all learning styles.

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

What's that? Fine arts and physical science? A concert pianist and Newton's Laws of Motion? The integration of the arts and the sciences comes full circle at Southside Primary School in Shelby County.

The school uses a curriculum framework based on the Different Ways of Knowing (DWoK) program, and student teams rotate through three years of nine units per year. With this experience already in hand, the special integration of physical science and fine arts did not seem to be such a stretch for most of the staff.

Monica Nichols, Southside's Title I coordinator and director of the TAPESTRY project (see box), integrated multiple activities into the regular classroom curriculum and routine.

"The lessons tied in with classroom units they were studying," explained



2 Southsides...

Nichols. "The Native American unit was explored through drum and flute music, Dirty Water examined frog choruses and natural water sounds, and the Immigrant Americans unit included practicing Morse code and hearing music from immigrant composers."

As teachers approached science academically in their classrooms, a visual artist helped students take a more creative approach to weather, soil and natural resources. "Students completed sand paintings of Native American weather symbols, masks of recycled paper products and watercolor mosaics of aquatic animals," said Nichols.

The forces/motions/dance component took on Newton's Laws of Motion. Student teams emulated a volcano erupting, a space ship blasting off and air particles inside a hot air balloon. In the process, they covered such intricate topics as inertia, friction, gravity, kinetic energy, direction and force. Students used dance movements, including swinging, twisting, leaping, sliding and stretching, to demonstrate those concepts.

"The Lexington Ballet Company performed, and its members demonstrated principles of physics through dance," said Nichols. "It was a good extension of what [the students] had already learned."

The final component of the series addressed energy and used the media of dance, music and drama in a series of four performances for the community.

Nichols made this observation about her school's TAPESTRY-funded approach to integrating arts and science instruction: "Managing the program really took more thought than planning for the actual content. Students must learn a lot before you can jump in to using other media to enhance that learning." She said students need to learn about materials — their cost, care, use — and must be able to respect and use personal space.

Nichols adds some words of advice for those who might try such a program in their school: "Training in DWoK and developing an integrated curriculum framework helped teachers tremendously. We all knew which teams would be studying which units in the first semester, so we could plan the units accordingly. I suggest teachers create a lesson plan and then think it through step by step to try to anticipate problems before they occur."

Principal Cynthia Zook says the integration of subject areas has helped her students make a connection between school and the real world. "They now have a better understanding of difficult science concepts, as well as a greater appreciation for the arts," Zook said. "This grant has provided a multitude of opportunities for enrichment and learning."

What is TAPESTRY?

TAPESTRY is a partnership of Toyota Motor Sales USA and the National Science Teachers Association. The program awards up to \$500,000 in grants each year to teachers who propose innovative programs with budgets of \$10,000 or less that will enhance science education in the school or district. In 1998, Southwestern High School in Pulaski County and Southside Primary in Shelby County were Kentucky's first-ever recipients.

Grants are available for middle and high school science teachers and elementary

teachers who teach some science in the classroom.

How can I apply?

1. Get an application kit from the National Science Teachers Association. Call (800) 807-9852; call NSTA's Fax on Demand service at (888) 400-6782 and request document 591; or send e-mail to ecrossley@nsta.org.

2. Design and plan a one-year project in either environmental education (emphasizing efficient use of resources and protection of the environment) or physical science applications. Projects are more likely to be considered for funding if

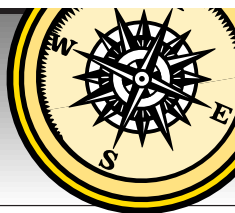
they are visionary, involve risk-taking and hands-on activities, have an interdisciplinary approach and relate science to students' lives.

3. Develop a project description, rationale, potential impact, evaluation plan, calendar and budget; outline the professional qualifications of project staff and attach letters of support. (See the application kit for details.)

4. Mail the completed proposal to NSTA/Toyota TAPESTRY, 1840 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201-3000, before the mid-January 2000 deadline.

For more information about TAPESTRY grants, visit www.nsta.org/programs/toyota.htm on the Internet.

2 Strategies



Build it and they will learn

Construction curriculum meets multiple needs

by Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

The construction industry needs 240,000 new workers each year to work for an annual salary between \$25,000 and \$75,000, according to data from the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC).

What does that have to do with public schools? It has everything to do with meeting the needs of individual students and with meeting the needs of the community and its work force. Southside Center for Applied Technology in Fayette County is partnering with local builders and contractors to meet work force needs.

R. Scott Davis with Davis and Plomin, a mechanical contracting firm, serves on the advisory council for the construction technology program at Southside. "We just don't have the trained people we need, and college-bound students don't really consider construction as a career opportunity," Davis said. "That's unfortunate."

In addition to teaching trade skills, a good applied technology program can lay the groundwork for numerous related vocations, such as architecture, engineering, interior design and real estate, Davis said.

The "Wheels of Learning" curriculum adopted at Southside last year was developed by the ABC with help from the National Center for Construction Education and Research. The program is pre-apprentice, and credentials move with the student to colleges, including Kentucky's regional universities, under articulation agreements with the ABC.

Of the eight Kentucky secondary schools that were offered the curricu-

lum, Southside is leading the way with expanding enrollment in this two-year program.

While traditional models for construction classes focus students in one area for both their junior and senior high school years, Southside uses a different approach. During the first year, teams of students complete nine-week rotations in construction; masonry; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC); and interior finishing. Gary Glass, who teaches interior finishing, says he likes the rotating schedule.

"The rotation limits the size or scope of the project you can do," Glass said. "On the plus side, you don't have to tie up materials and space for long periods, and students get authentic exposure to each field and can make a more informed career choice."

The second year, students may choose a career major in one of the four areas and take year-long courses with a more closely narrowed focus. They also have opportunities to co-op, job shadow or intern on a job site, and at age 16 they may be eligible for a summer work program.

The students are able to pick up one of the three mathematics credits required for graduation. "Math is a critical component of construction trade skills," said Mark Williams, Southside's principal.

A mathematics teacher integrates technical math into each of the four areas of study, teaching theories through applicable concepts.

"Students are evaluated daily, just as they would be on a job site," said Williams. Both parents and students sign a form explaining the class, the grading system, expectations and disciplinary actions. The course content



Photo by Rick McComb

Student Kevin DeWeese works on a pinch-and-slip joint during a pipe fitting class at Southside Center for Applied Technology in Fayette County. The center and local builders and contractors are partners in preparing students for jobs available in the construction industry.

at Southside is closely aligned with Kentucky's academic expectations.

"The students we see coming out of this program are well prepared for the construction environment," said Davis. "They are cross-trained, can work in teams and with people of various social, cultural and economic backgrounds, they are flexible and have developed good work ethics."

The students, who attend Southside from Fayette, Scott, Woodford and Jessamine counties, seem to be pleased with the new program. Justin Peel of East Jessamine High School discovered "the creativity in masonry, interior finishing and HVAC."

Kevin DeWeese of Tates Creek High came into the program for the carpentry training and found out "I really liked some of the other areas, too, particularly interior finishing because I like detail."

Cane Neal, a senior at Henry Clay High, spent half a day at school and half a day working at a co-op site. "This program gave me a start, a chance to really see what it's like. You really learn a lot on the job site, including patience."

For information on the Wheels of Learning curriculum, contact a local member of the Associated Builders and Contractors or visit the ABC's Education Department from their home page at www.abc.org. For information on Southside's implementation, contact Principal Mark Williams by phone at (606) 381-3603 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at mwilliam@fayette.k12.ky.us.

Students draw on the past to connect with the future

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

You can't know where you're going unless you know where you've been. Young people have heard it; how do educators get them to buy it?

Rebecca Hanly, student services coordinator at the Kentucky Historical Society, suggests making history an active part of their world. Her agency's Kentucky Junior Historical Society (KJHS) works with any social studies curriculum to make students participants in the history of their communities, regions and state. Students in grades 4 through 12 may become involved in a wide variety of KJHS activities.

"Hands-on projects like basket weaving and doll making help them understand how our modern conveniences evolved," said Metcalfe County teacher Robin McMurtrey, "and (these activities) lead directly into conversations about the future."

Melissa Earnest, advisor for Caldwell County High School's organization, adds that "competitions like the 'history bowl' provide practice in quick recall, strategy, following directions and critical thinking."

Floyd County educator Bernard Shayne Wicker says local KJHS chapter projects do not necessarily target the "top 10" students. "Projects range from historical research papers to crafts," said Wicker, a special education teacher at Allen Central High. "Any student can participate."

Local clubs throughout the state have been active since 1961 under the



Photo by Rick McComb

Teacher Robin McMurtrey and student Karyn Hodges work together on a stenciling project. Karyn and other students in Summer Shade Elementary's chapter of the Kentucky Junior Historical Society learned that people in their community used stencils for decorating walls during the 1800s.

leadership of sponsors, including teachers, parents, historical groups or community organizations. Wicker sponsors the Floyd County Young Historians, a KJHS chapter for students at Allen Central High and Middle schools,

James A. Duff Elementary and Prestonsburg High.

McMurtrey, who as a student was a KJHS member, is now a teacher and KJHS club sponsor at Summer Shade Elementary. She says the organization

connects students to the past and helps prepare them for the future. "KJHS teaches students *how* at the same time it teaches them *why* and makes history fun and fulfilling for everyone," she said.

Although the Junior Historical Society's main mission is to foster appreciation of Kentucky history and an understanding of its importance, the organization also develops leadership, motivation and self-esteem.

Caldwell County's Earnest said the small-group nature of most projects facilitates self-determination skills that carry over to other classes. "Many of the projects overlap the content areas," she said. "These students become valuable resources for teachers all over the building."

Teacher recalls her own history

Robin McMurtrey, a teacher at Metcalfe County's Summer Shade Elementary and a KJHS club sponsor, recalls her days as a student in the club:

"I became a member of the Junior Historical Society when I was in the 6th grade. We attended every convention, and I ran for state office and served on the state board while in high school. The experiences I had were priceless. I learned facts about my county and the entire state through research and participating in the history bowl. I learned how our way of life evolved. I learned to be a better public speaker and how to do effective research. I discovered genealogy ... (which) gave me insight into my family and helped me better understand family dynamics.

"I wouldn't trade what I learned in those seven years of KJHS for anything. It helped me be a better learner and a better teacher."

Interested in starting a local chapter?

The Kentucky Junior Historical Society is a statewide membership organization that encourages students in grades 4 through 12 to become active participants in the historical activities of their community, region and state. Students showcase their work at the annual KJHS convention in Frankfort and compete with members from all areas of the state in categories as diverse as art, research papers, photography and oral history.

Membership dues are \$3 per student. Each student member receives a membership card, a monthly newsletter and a copy of *Kentucky Heritage*, a publication of the award-winning work showcased at the annual KJHS convention. Both members and sponsors receive free admission to many state historical sites and museums. Sponsors also receive a free one-year membership in the Kentucky Historical Society.

For more information and ideas on how to make Kentucky history come alive in the classroom, call Rebecca Hanly at (502) 564-1792 (extension 4475) or toll free at (877) 444-7867, or send e-mail to her attention through the KETS global listing or at rebecca.hanly@mail.state.ky.us. Information is also available through the Kentucky Historical Society's Web page at www.kyhistory.org.

Katherine Kramer coaches Robert Redford and Kristin Scott Thomas for a scene in "The Horse Whisperer." Kramer's talents are available to Kentucky students and teachers through the Kentucky Arts Council's Artist-in-Residence Program.



Photo submitted

Robert Redford's choreographer wants to teach your students to dance!

By Judy Sizemore
Kentucky Arts Council

Editor's Note: Judy Sizemore is a "circuit rider," the Kentucky Arts Council's designation for its regional representatives. She serves the council's Southeastern Region.

What do you and your students have in common with Robert Redford? Thanks to the Kentucky Arts Council, all of you can share the same dance instructor and choreographer.

Katherine Kramer, the choreographer and movement coach for Redford's film "The Horse Whisperer," is also on the Arts Council's roster of artists available to do residency work in Kentucky schools. Kramer mixes tap and jazz dance in her teaching as well as in her performances, which include appearances at numerous international children's festivals.

"I enjoy getting people to dance," she said. "Shared rhythms can produce a sense of community, security, openness and joy. Tap, a form of music and dance, arose out of a social context and became a uniquely American art form

rooted in European and African cultures. I'll bring the shoes, and we'll be percussionists with our feet, dancers with our bodies and choreographers with our minds."

Like all council artists, Kramer recognizes the value of integrating the arts across the curriculum and has incorporated her jazz tap artistry into mathematics and history classes as well as dance classes. The Arts Council roster includes approximately 50 artists — widely published authors, award-winning watercolorists, internationally acclaimed percussionists and others — all with outstanding resumes in their fields.

The council conducts a rigorous review process that includes thorough evaluations of each artist's work plus interviews to determine which artists have the communication and presentation skills to engage students in the creative process as they introduce the terminology, concepts and cultural context of their art forms. Artists selected for residencies attend a four-day summer orientation on Kentucky's arts and humanities core content, curriculum and assessment methods.

What does this mean for your

school or classroom? It means you can tap into the talent of some of today's foremost painters, sculptors, storytellers, dancers, choreographers, musicians, composers, writers, theater artists, puppeteers, folk artists and folklorists. You can bring the creative energy of West African storytelling or Appalachian folk music, for example, into your classroom. You can collaborate with professional artists to plan a five- to 90-day residency that addresses your specific arts education needs and goals.

The first step toward providing this resource to your students is to contact John Benjamin, director of Arts in Education, Kentucky Arts Council, (888) 833-ARTS or John.Benjamin@mail.state.ky.us. Information is also available on the Internet at www.kyarts.org.

The deadline for applications for five- or 10-day Teacher Incentive Project residencies to occur during the spring 2000 semester is Oct. 15, 1999. The deadline for longer Artist-in-Residence residencies to occur in 2000-01 will be Jan. 21, 2000.

Curriculum teaches teens to understand, prevent crime

Training will be available this fall to educators interested in implementing a national program designed to help teens understand crime's effects and prevent crime in their own schools and communities.

The program, Teens, Crime and the Community, includes interactive classroom learning plus opportunities for students to take local action against specific crime problems. The program curriculum can be infused into law, social studies, civics, health or other classes. It can also be taught in clubs, juvenile justice environments or other non-school settings.

Training sessions offer educators opportunities to learn interactive tools and strategies for teaching the curriculum and implementing the program in their schools or communities.

Street Law Inc. and the National Crime Prevention Council created the program. Kentucky's Administrative Office of the Courts implements it in the region that includes Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana. The office is collaborating with the Kentucky Center for School Safety to offer program training free of charge on the following dates:

Aug. 27, Louisville

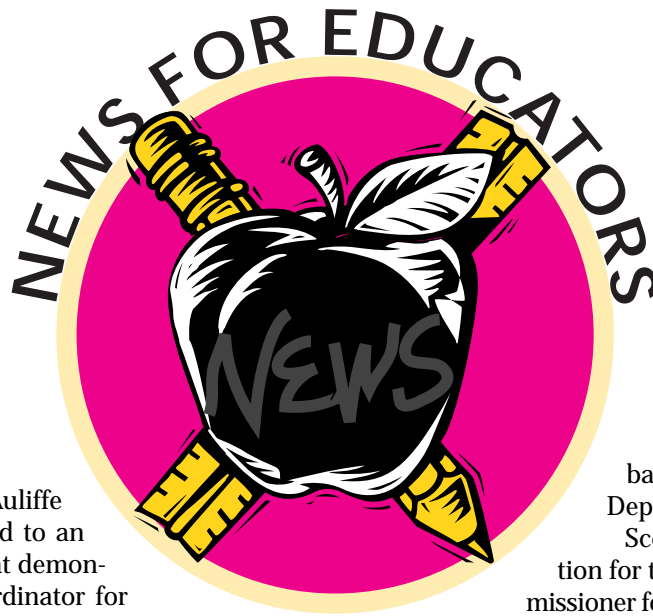
Oct. 18, Murray

Oct. 26, Northern Kentucky

Nov. 8, Princeton

Dec. 7, Somerset

All sessions are scheduled for 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. local time. For registration, contact Keri Schelling at (502) 695-4630 or kschelling@mail.state.ky.us. For information about this and other law-related education programs, visit www.aoc.state.ky.us/lre on the Internet or contact Rachel Bingham at (800) 928-2350 or rachelb@mail.aoc.state.ky.us.



Christa McAuliffe Fellowship has social studies and science focus

The deadline for applying for this year's Christa McAuliffe Fellowship is Sept. 17. The fellowship will be awarded to an experienced Kentucky teacher who develops a plan that demonstrates how he or she would serve as a resource coordinator for middle-grades social studies or science academies scheduled next summer by the Kentucky Department of Education.

The fellowship recipient would work with regional service center consultants to plan and conduct pre-academy sessions and the week-long summer academies, with an emphasis on teachers' content knowledge.

The Department of Education will supplement the fellowship to permit the recipient to take a one-semester sabbatical leave and continue work through the summer.

Any full-time P-12 public or private school teacher who has been employed as a teacher for eight or more years may submit an application. A Christa McAuliffe Fellow must return to a teaching position for at least two years following the completion of the fellowship.

The fellowship will begin Oct. 1, 1999, and conclude no later than June 30, 2000. To learn more about the program, contact Robin Chandler at (502) 564-2106 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at rchandle@kde.state.ky.us, or go to the department's Web site at www.kde.state.ky.us/oapd/CM_information.asp.

Cody forms parent council

As part of the Department of Education's continuing effort to encourage two-way communication, Education Commissioner Wilmer S. Cody recently formed a parent council. The new 46-member Parent Advisory Council will meet four times a year to comment on policy and regulatory issues and serve as a communications link between the department and parent groups.

Parents on the council represent a number of groups and organizations, including the Kentucky Association of School Councils, the Kentucky Parent-Teacher Association and the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership.

Cody made the appointments with recommendations from the various parent groups. The appointments rotate every two years and provide for regional distribution and diversity.

At its first meeting in May, the council determined that its initial priorities would be alternative school settings, budget allocations for school councils, teacher standards and parental involvement. For more information, contact Becky Goad by phone at (502) 564-3930 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or bgoad@kde.state.ky.us.

Department announces new leadership appointments

Two veteran Kentucky educators and one from Alabama have taken on new leadership responsibilities at the Department of Education.

Scott Trimble, former director of assessment implementation for the Department of Education, is the new associate commissioner for the Office of Assessment and Accountability. Trimble's tenure at the department includes 20 years in the area of assessment, including 11 years as a division director.

To contact Trimble, phone (502) 564-2256 or send e-mail to sttrimble@kde.state.ky.us.

Tom Peterson is the new associate commissioner for the Office of Leadership and School Improvement. Peterson has approximately 30 years of experience in education and has been on the department staff since he became director of professional development in 1996. He replaces Bob Lumsden, who retired in June.

To contact Peterson, phone (502) 564-6880 or send e-mail to tpeterso@kde.state.ky.us.

Wayne Vickers, of Birmingham, Ala., is the new director of the department's Division of Curriculum Development. Vickers has demonstrated leadership as a teacher, program coordinator, assistant principal, principal and central office curriculum supervisor in a large school system. He replaces Betty Edwards, who resigned in June.

To contact Vickers, phone (502) 564-2106 or e-mail wwickers@kde.state.ky.us.

Win prizes for proving that technology works in schools!

The Kentucky Association for Education Communications and Technology is offering prizes for projects that measure technology's impact on education.

Prizes will go to Kentucky-focused technology research project proposals chosen by a panel of local educators. Anyone may submit, but the association especially encourages teacher-technology leader-university professor teams that want to research Kentucky technology applications.

Prizes include cash, memberships in the International Society for Technology in Education, a trip to the National Educational Computing Conference, software and various recognitions. Awards will be presented at the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (formerly known as the Kentucky Education Technology Conference) March 2-4, 2000, in Louisville.

Application details are posted on the Department of Education's Web site at www.kde.state.ky.us/oet/customer/Research_award.asp. Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of local technology experts.

Proposals are due by Jan. 31, 2000, to Carolyn Rude-Parkins, Room 343 Education, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292; phone (502) 852-060; fax (502) 852-4563; e-mail cparkins@louisville.edu.

OOPS!

Our apologies to the students on the Jackson Independent mission control team who appeared in a photo published in the May issue of *Kentucky Teacher*. We incorrectly identified them as being from Owsley County. Both groups flew successful missions on the same day from Hazard's Challenger Center. Congratulations to both teams — and to the Challenger Center staff members who make this opportunity available every day for students throughout the region.

THE Bulletin Board

By Lisa Y. Gross
Kentucky Department of Education

Conference on school calendar scheduled for Sept. 20

The Kentucky Association for Year-Round Education (KAYRE) will host its second conference on alternative calendars Sept. 20 at Bardstown High School. Participants will meet from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. to explore the use of time to influence student learning. The featured speaker will be Charles Ballinger, executive director of the National Association for Year-Round Education.

Registration in advance is \$25 per individual in KAYRE-affiliated districts and \$35 per individual in other districts. On-site registration will be \$40. Professional development and leadership credits are available.

CONTACT: Elsie Morrison, (502) 348-1650; emorris@btown.k12.ky.us

Free health insurance available for eligible children

The Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP) offers free health insurance coverage to children through age 18 whose families have incomes under 150 percent of the federal poverty line. For a family of four, the income maximum is \$25,050 a year.

A family can apply for this coverage by following the process outlined on the KCHIP application form. Forms are available from any local health department, Department for Community-Based Services office, or family resource and youth services center. Families may call (877) 524-4718 to have an application mailed to them or to get help with the application process. Callers with hearing impairments may call (877) 524-4719. Both numbers are toll free.

For school officials, details about KCHIP are available from local health departments or family resource and youth services centers.

School councils conference planned for Oct. 21-23

The Kentucky Association of School Councils will hold its annual conference, "Excellence Through Diversity," Oct. 21-23 at the Executive Inn in Louisville. Sessions will explore strategies for engaging all students, council leadership, decision making, school safety, and assessment and accountability. The keynote speaker will be National Teacher of the Year Andrew Baumgartner.

CONTACT: Ronda Harmon, (606) 238-2188 or kascouncil@aol.com

KCSS conference set for September

The Kentucky Council for the Social Studies annual conference, scheduled for Sept. 16 and 17 at the Galt House in Louisville, will offer teacher-focused sessions on the new state assessment and accountability system, recently revised core content, technology in social studies classrooms, History Alive! and a panel discussion with teachers from schools that have shown gains in their state assessment scores every year since 1992.

CONTACTS: Laura Clifford, Jefferson County Schools, (502) 485-3054, lcliff01@jefferson.k12.ky.us; or J. Todd Tolbert, Greenwood High School, (270) 781-8548 or (877) 843-5277

Volunteer coalition to hold conference Nov. 12

The Kentucky Coalition of School Volunteer Organizations will hold a one-day conference Nov. 12 at the Holiday Inn on Fern Valley Road in Louisville. Workshops will cover confidentiality and the law, creating a school newsletter, barriers to parent involvement, establishing a volunteer program and other topics. The featured speaker will be June Mumme, wife of UK football coach Hal Mumme and author of "Play the Next Play."

Workshops are designed for teachers, office staff, administrators, volunteer coordinators and volunteers who want to be reading tutors. The cost will be \$75 per participant. The registration deadline is Oct. 15.

CONTACT: Nancy C. Rogers, PO Box 516, Lebanon, KY 40033, (502) 692-1300, kcsvo@kih.net; www.myad.net/KCSVO on the Internet

Two conferences spotlight environmental education

Conferences in August and October will spotlight environmental education.

The North American Association for Environmental Education will meet Aug. 26-30 in Cincinnati. The conference will include speakers, workshops and field trips related to "Linking Environmental Education with Education Reform." For information and registration forms, visit the organization's Web site at www.naaee.org/html/conf.htm.

The Kentucky Association for Environmental Education will meet Oct. 8-10 in Frankfort. This conference will offer concurrent workshops and field trips plus three pre-conference sessions. A discount is given for registration postmarked by Sept. 18. For a registration packet, phone Karen Reagor at (606) 578-0312 or e-mail KPreagor@aol.com.



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Commissioner of Education Wilmer S. Cody
Associate Commissioner Hunt Helm
for Communications
Director Armando Arrastia
Division of Public Information
Editor Fran Salyers
Copy Writers Sharon Crouch Farmer
Faun S. Fishback
Lisa York Gross
Photographer Rick McComb
Graphics and Design Susie Morrow, Manager
Barbara Burch
Bill Davis
Michael Gray



Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to *Kentucky Teacher*, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteach@kde.state.ky.us.

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Printed with state funds by the Winchester Sun, Winchester, Ky., on recycled paper



Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

AUGUST 1999



Photo by Rick McComb

ART OF CONCENTRATION — Tequila Leonard listens intently to her teacher at Junction City Elementary in Boyle County. Tequila is one of 623,000 students joining 46,400 teachers in Kentucky's 1,392 schools for the start of the new school year.

“This has been a rigorous process. It's not been just a small group of people making these decisions. There has been input from across the state, and that input has been valued.”

Janice Eaves, mathematics consultant, Region 2 Service Center, on the process for revising Kentucky's "Core Content for Assessment." For news about the revision process and the results, see Page 1.

Kentucky Department of Education

Visit the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site: www.kde.state.ky.us

Wilmer S. Cody, Commissioner